girls compared to boys. This is a reflection of gender bias against girls and the unequal status of women.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Toxic effect of endosulfan

2660. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the acute toxic effect of Endosulfan on fish, other aquatic life and human beings and its role as the leading casue of pesticide poisoning;

(b) whether it is a fact that its use has been banned/restricted in some countries; and

(c) if so, the details and Government's reaction to the use of the hazardous pesticide in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SHEES RAM OLA): (a) All pesticides including Endosulfan being toxic in nature have toxic effects on fish, other aquatic life and human beings. However, safe and judicious use of Endosulfan as per the recommended practices may not be the cause of pesticide poisoning.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government had constituted an Expert Committee in 1989 to review the use of 14 Pesticides including Endosulfan. After considering the recommendations of the Committee it was decided to continue its use. Reviewing the use of pesticides is a continuous process and it is proposed to refer this product for further review.

Establishment of residential primary schools for poorest of the poor

2661. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently decided to establish at least one residential primary school in each district, exclusively for the poorest of the poor;

(b) if so, what will demarcate the poor and the poorest of the poor and how these schools will be funded and administered; and

(c) what are the details of the scheme to be launched very soon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MUHI RAM SAIKIA): (a) to (c) The Finance Minister in his Budget Speech for 1996-97 has set apart an initial sum of Rupees Five crore to assist in the establishment of residential primary schools for poor children irrespective of caste or creed. It is intended that this scheme should be implemented through non-government organisations. The guidelines and operational modalities of the scheme shall be worked out in consultation with the State Governments.

National Conference by FAO

2662. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) organised a national conference on July 3, 1996 in New Delhi to study how far the Panchayati Raj

System in India served as a delivery mechanism for food security; and

(b) if so, the main observations made therein and the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA): (a) and (b) The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) organised a conference on *Panchayati Raj-the Key to Food Security'* on 2-3 July, 1996 in New Delhi as a preparatory meeting to the World Food Summit being convened by the FAO in Rome in November, 1996. The conference discussed options relevant to India for attaining food security including, *inter-alia*, measures for developing the Panchayati Raj System to serve as an effective delivery mechanism for food security.

The conference observed that the *Panchayats and local self-Government* institutions can play a crucial role in ensuring household level, food and nutrition security in India and made the following recommendations:—

(i) Empowerment of Panchayats with suitable allocation of financial resources.

(ii) Building the capability of Panchayats for village level planning for food security.

(iii) Education and training of elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayats with a focus on sustainable food productivity through micro-level planning.

(iv) Developing of skills of small and marginal farmers and workers, appropriate cost effective research, promotion of local off-farming income/employment. generation activities, etc.

Production capacity of Fertilizer Industry

2663. SHRIMATI MALTI SHARMA: SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS & FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the production capacity of the fertilizer industries in the country;

(b) whether these fertilizer industries are producing fertilizers as per their installed capacity;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor;

(d) the particulars of these fertilizer industries that had sought permission for increasing their production capacity during the last three years; and

(e) the action taken on each such request till date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SHEES RAM OLA): (a) to (c) The installed capacity of the fertilizer industries in the country as on 31.3.1996 is 93.06 lakh metric tonnes of nitrogen and 28.22 lakh metric tonnes of phosphate. The overall capacity utilization in the fertilizer industry during 1995-96 was 96.9% in the case of nitrogen and 90.6% in the case of phosphate.

(d) and (e) As per the Industrial Policy Statement of 24.7.1991, no industrial licence is required for setting up a fertilizer plant. However, public sector/ cooperative units under the administrative control of the Department of Fertilizers have to obtain *Government's approval for incurring* capital expenditure over and above their delegated financial powers. The details of the major fertilizer projects of these undertakings under implementation, are given in Statement-I (*see* below). The details of the proposals from PSUs/ *Cooperatives for setting up fertilizer* projects within the country, which have been submitted under the prescribed clearance procedure, are given in Statement-II (*See* below).